

Environment of Negotiations

- ✓ 1. Why is the DRV in Paris? What is the evidence?
[Among the hypotheses:
 - a. Out of weakness, to accept a face-saving formula for defeat.
 - b. To negotiate the withdrawal of U.S. (and NVA) forces, and/or a compromise political settlement, giving a chance for NLF victory in the South.
 - c. To give the U.S. a face-saving way to withdraw.
 - d. To undermine the GVN and U.S./GVN relations, and to relieve U.S. military pressure in both North and South Vietnam.]
2. What will be the effect on attitudes and behavior in Southeast Asia -- Communist and non-Communist -- of alternative outcomes in Vietnam? What views (e.g., among those expressed in the most recent NIE on this subject) are controversial within the Government, and what evidence bears on these issues?

NVA/VC

3. What is the evidence supporting various hypotheses, and the overall adequacy of evidence, relating to the following questions:
 - a. Why did NVA units leave South Vietnam last summer and fall?
 - b. Why did the predicted "third-wave offensive" by the NVA/VC not take place?
 - c. Why are VC guerrillas and local forces now relatively dormant?
[Among the hypotheses: 1) response to VC/NVA battle losses, forcing withdrawal or passivity; 2) to put diplomatic pressure on U.S. to move to substantive talks in Paris; and/or 3) to prepare for future operations.]
4. What rate of NVA/VC attrition would outrun their ability to replenish by infiltration and recruitment, as currently calculated? Do present operations achieve this? If not, what force levels and other conditions would be necessary?
5. To what relative extent does the U.S./RVNAF, or the NVA/VC, control the rate of VC/NVA attrition; i.e., to what extent, in terms of our tactical experience, can heavy losses persistently be imposed on VC/NVA forces, despite their possible intention to limit casualties by avoiding contact?

[Among the hypotheses:

- a. Contact is predominantly at VC tactical initiative, and we cannot reverse this; VC need suffer high casualties only so long as they are willing to accept them, in seeking contact; or
 - b. current VC/NVA loss rates can be maintained by present forces ^{US/GVN} -- as increased X% by Y additional forces -- whatever the DRV/VC choose to do, short of further major withdrawal.]
6. What controversies persist on the estimate of VC Order of Battle; in particular, on the guerrilla forces and the various categories of infrastructure? On VC recruiting, and manpower pool? What is the evidence for different estimates, and what is the overall adequacy of evidence?
 7. What are NVA/VC capabilities for launching a large-scale offensive, with "dramatic" results (even if taking high casualties and without holding objectives long), in the next six months? (E.g., an offensive against one or more cities, or against most newly "pacified" hamlets.) How adequate is the evidence?

RVNAF

8. What differences of opinion exist concerning extent of RVNAF improvement, and what is evidence underlying different views? (E.g., compare recent CIA memo with MACV views.) For example:
 - a. What is the actual level of "genuine" small-unit actions and night actions in ARVN, RF and PF: i.e., actions that would be classed as such within the U.S. Army, and in particular, offensive ambushes and patrols? How much has this changed?
 - b. How much has the officer selection and promotion system actually changed over the years (as distinct from changes in paper "programs")? How many junior officers hold commissions despite lack of a high school diploma?
 - c. What known disciplinary action has resulted from ARVN looting of civilians, such as took place widely last spring?
 - d. To what extent have past "anti-desertion" decrees and efforts lessened the rate of desertion; why not more?

9. To what extent could RVNAF -- as it is now -- handle the VC (Main Force, local forces, guerrillas), without U.S. combat support, if all VNA units were withdrawn:
 - a. If VC still had Northern fillers.
 - b. If all Northerners (but not regroupes) were withdrawn.
10. To what extent could RVNAF -- as it is now -- also handle a sizeable level of NVA forces:
 - a. With U.S. air and artillery support.
 - b. With above and also U.S. ground forces in reserve.
 - c. Without U.S. direct support, but with increased RVNAF artillery and air capacity?
11. What, in various views, are the required changes -- in RVNAF command, organization, equipment, training and incentives, in political environment, in U.S. modes of influence -- for making RVNAF adequate to the tasks cited in questions 9 and 10 above? How long would this take? What are the practical obstacles to these changes, and what new U.S. moves would be needed to overcome these?

Pacification

12. How much, and where, has the security situation and the balance of influence between the VC and NLF actually changed in the countryside over time, contrasting the present to such benchmarks as end-61, end-63, end-65, end-67? What are the best indicators of such change, or lack of it? What factors have been mainly responsible for such change as has occurred? Why has there not been more?
13. What are the reasons for expecting more change in the countryside in the next two years than in past intervals? What are the reasons for not expecting more? What changes in RVNAF, GVN, U.S., and VC practices and adaptiveness would be needed to increase favorable change in security and control? How likely are such changes, individually and together; what are the obstacles?
14. On the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES):
 - a. What are the advantages and weaknesses of this reporting system, in representing security or "control"?

- b. Are "C" hamlets properly labeled as "GVN-controlled," or should they be regarded as "contested" or "subject to significant VC pressure and influence"?
15. What has been the range of impacts of the current Accelerated Pacification Effort: e.g. on hard-core Communist apparatus in contested or VC hamlets; on Vietnamese opinion and anti-Americanism? How long are these efforts likely to last?

Politics

16. How adequate is our information; and what is it based upon, concerning:
- a. Damage to civilians by air and artillery and looting and misbehavior by RVNAF.
 - b. Attitudes of Vietnamese elites not now closely aligned with the GVN (e.g., religious leaders, professors, youth leaders, professionals, union leaders, village notables) towards participation -- if offered -- in the GVN; the current legitimacy and acceptability of the GVN; likewise (given "peace") for the NLF or various "neutralist" coalitions; towards U.S. interest, as they interpret it (e.g., U.S. plans for ending the war, U.S. perceived alignments with particular individuals and forces within Vietnam, U.S. concern for various Vietnamese interests).
 - c. Precise patterns of existent political alignments within GVN/RVNAF and outside it, as based on family ties, corruption, officers' class, secret organizations and parties, religious and regional background.
17. What are the prospects -- and what changes in what factors, conditions, U.S. policies would increase or decrease them -- for changes in the GVN toward: (a) broadening of the government to include participation of all significant non-Communist regional and religious groupings (at province and district levels, as well as cabinet); (b) stronger emphasis, in selection and promotion of officers and officials, on competence and performance (as in the Communist Vietnamese system) as distinct from considerations of family, corruption, and social (e.g., educational) background; and (c) political mobilization of non-Communist sympathies and energies in support of the GVN, as evidenced, e.g., by reduced desertion, by willing alignment of religious, provincial and other leaders with the GVN, by wide cooperation with anti-corruption and pro-efficiency drives.

How critical is each of these changes to prospects of attaining -- at current, reduced or increased levels of U.S. military effort -- either "victory," or a strong non-Communist political role after a

compromise settlement of hostilities?

18. To what extent do recent changes in command and administration represent moves to improve competence, as distinct from replacement of one clique by another? What is the basis of judgment? What is the impact of the recent removal of minority-group province and district officials (Hoa Hao, Coo Dai, Montagnard) in their respective areas?

U.S. Forces

19. How do military deployment and tactics today differ from those of 6-12 months ago? What are reasons for changes, and what has this impact been?
20. In what different ways (including innovations in organization) might U.S. force-levels be reduced, to various levels, while minimizing impact on combat capability?